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205

DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN®



Q A Q
SZYMON
KUDRANSKI
- 10 -



PREVIOUSLY IN SPAWN

Sara pleads with a reluctant Jim to save the injured photographer. After agreeing to do so for Sara, Jim miraculously heals him, and chaos ensues. Jim and Sara take off into the alleys to escape the madness. Sara wants answers that Jim just doesn't have. However, he asks her to trust him, and transports her back to her apartment.

As the Old Guard watches on, they realize they might be dealing with a much different animal than originally anticipated.

Marc continues fielding calls for Jim's interviews, and tries to sort through Jim's unexplainable past. His girlfriend, Susan, makes it clear she's aggravated with the amount of time he spends paying attention to Jim and not her.

Frustrated, Jim makes his way back to the alleys, where he meets up with Clown. Although Clown once thought they should stay underground, he encourages Jim to step out into the limelight, away from Heaven and Hell's grips.

While Clown thought he had control of the Old Guard, Bludd proves Clown otherwise, by asking them to do some tests of his own on Spawn.

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The Internet. In a private chat room



Hellspwn: You see this yet?

AngelsROK: See what?

Hellspwn: Where you been hiding?



Hellspwn: The dude in New York.



AngelsROK: Lots of 'dudes' there. Which one?

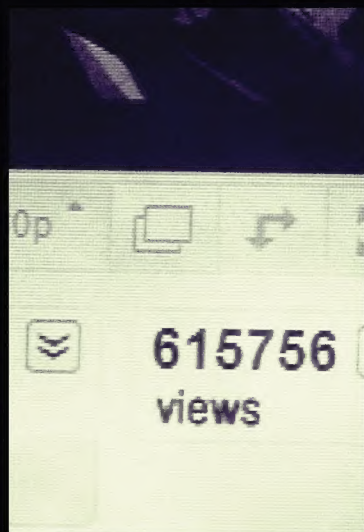
Hellspwn: The one THAT WAS ON TV!!!!



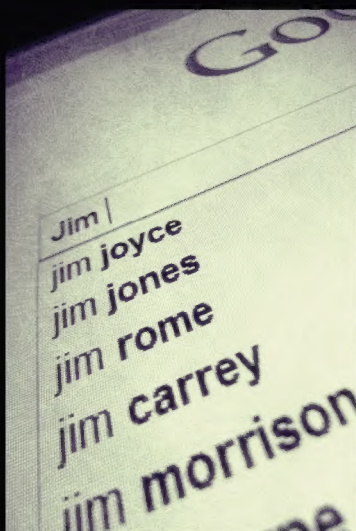
AngelsROK: Still don't know what you're talking about.



Hellspwn: WOW! Do a search for 'Jim Downing'
AngelsROK: That phony healer guy?



Hellspwn: Yeah.



Redeemer69: He's right. This is AMAZING!!!

AngelsROK: Why?



Hellspwn: Just watch the clip!!!



Redeemer69: Because it might be REAL!!!

New York City.



AMATEUR FOOTAGE HAS BEGUN FLOODING ITS WAY ONTO THE INTERNET AND VARIOUS NEWS OUTLETS. THESE CLIPS SHOW A MAN NAMED JIM DOWNING AS HE--SOMEHOW--WILLS A SEVERELY INJURED MAN BACK TO HEALTH.



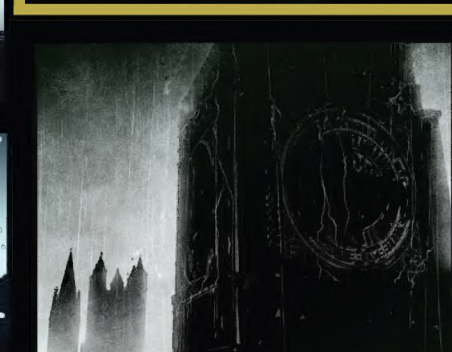
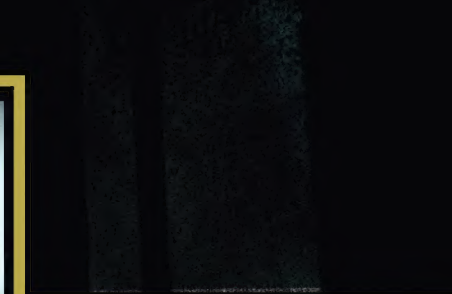
Paris.



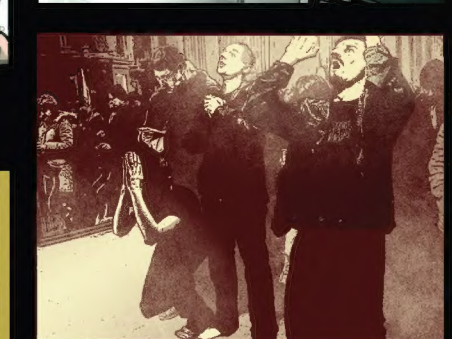
Baghdad.



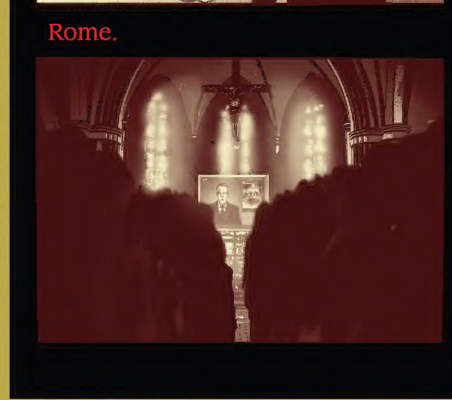
Moscow.



London.



Rome.



MR. DOWNING WAS ALSO SEEN A FEW DAYS AGO PERFORMING A SIMILAR ACT OF MERCY ON THE KARLENE PHILLIPS SHOW. MOST CRITICS VIEWED THAT AS NOTHING MORE THAN A RATINGS STUNT--BUT THESE LATEST VIDEOS NOW GIVE CREDENCE TO WHAT SOME EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNTS ARE CALLING A 'REAL LIFE RESURRECTION.'

Later that Evening

RECAPPING OUR TOP STORY-- THE STREETS OF NEW YORK BECAME THE SITE OF WHAT SOME DOCTORS ARE CALLING A 'GENUINE MIRACLE.' A PERSON IDENTIFIED AS JIM DOWNING HAS AGAIN PERFORMED A FEAT THAT, AS YET, CANNOT BE EXPLAINED AWAY. THIS MARKS THE THIRD SUCH OCCURRENCE IN WHICH MR. DOWNING WAS AT THE CENTER.

THE FIRST WAS A STRING OF INEXPLICABLE RECOVERIES AT TWO NEW YORK CITY HOSPITALS. CERTAIN PATIENTS HAD BEEN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH ANOTHER PATIENT, WHO DOCTORS ARE IDENTIFYING AS MR. DOWNING.

THEN RECENTLY, ON LIVE TELEVISION, HE CURED A YOUNG BOY'S UNTREATABLE CONDITION. IN BOTH INSTANCES, OUR PRODUCERS LEARNED THAT A GROUP OF DOCTORS PERFORMED THOROUGH TESTS ON THESE 'CURED' PATIENTS, CONFIRMING THE AILMENTS HAD COMPLETELY DISAPPEARED.

MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS ARE AT A LOSS FOR ANY EXPLANATION.

SO, WHAT HAD FIRST SEEMED A HOAX IS FAST BECOMING A NATIONAL STORY. AS REPORTED EARLIER, MR. DOWNING HAD ONLY RECENTLY COME OUT OF A COMA. BUT, TRY AS THEY MIGHT, HIS DOCTORS HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO CONFIRM HIS IDENTITY. TO DATE, NO BACKGROUND INFORMATION OR RECORDS HAVE SURFACED. MR. DOWNING HIMSELF SEEMS UNABLE TO PROVIDE ANY DETAILS RELATING TO HIS PAST.

WITNESSES TO THE LATEST 'MIRACLE' SAID MR. DOWNING FLED WITH A FEMALE COMPANION, SOMEHOW ELUDING REPORTERS. WHEN QUESTIONED AS TO HIS WHEREABOUTS, THE POLICE HAD NO COMMENT.

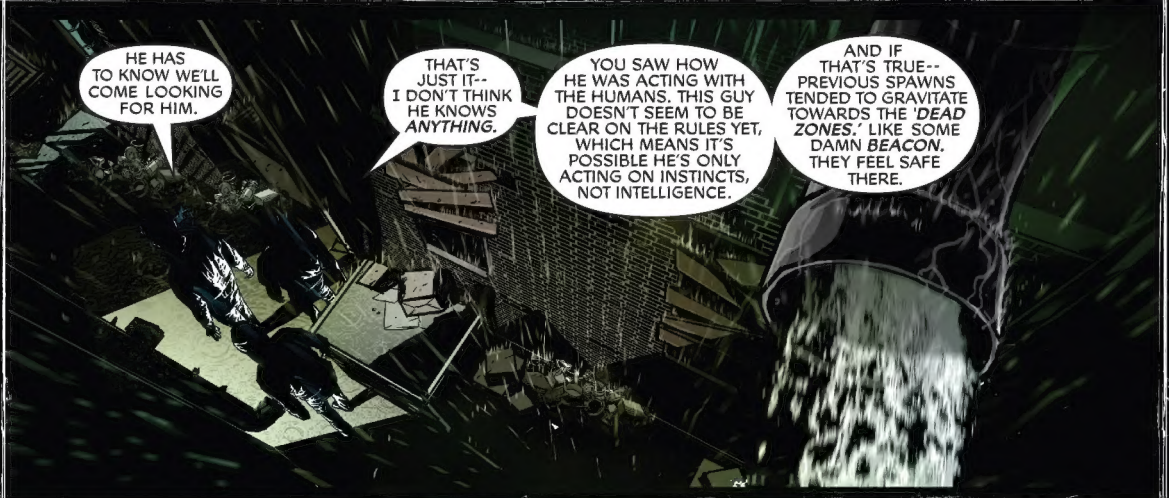


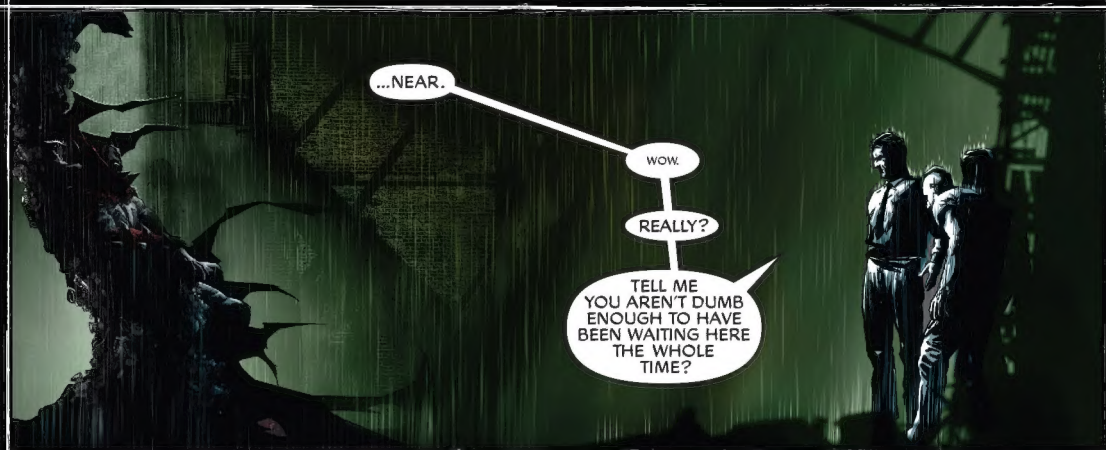


"HIS FLIGHT FROM
THE SCENE HAS
INTRODUCED THE
POSSIBILITY OF A
TROUBLED PAST.
AUTHORITIES
CONTINUE TO LOOK
FOR BOTH MR.
DOWNING AND
THE YOUNG FEMALE
HE WAS LAST SEEN
WITH.

"BY ONE ACCOUNT,
MR. DOWNING AND THE
WOMAN SEEMED TO
VANISH INTO THIN AIR.

"OTHERS
SAY HE WAS
JUST ABLE TO
HIDE IN THE
SHADOWS."





...NEAR.

WOW.

REALLY?

TELL ME
YOU AREN'T DUMB
ENOUGH TO HAVE
BEEN WAITING HERE
THE WHOLE
TIME?



I'M GETTING
TIRED OF YOU
REPORTERS.

Whew! THAT'S
A RELIEF! YOU'RE
ONLY *STUPID*, NOT
SUICIDAL. NOT THAT
IT'LL MAKE MUCH
DIFFERENCE.

SO...YOU
GOING TO ACT LIKE
A BIG SHOT AND
MAKE THIS DIFFICULT--
OR CAN WE JUST
TAKE THE EASY
ROUTE?



I'LL GIVE
YOU TEN
SECONDS
TO LEAVE!

DIFFICULT
IT IS,
THEN!

LET'S GET
THE OBVIOUS
TEST OUT OF THE
WAY FIRST.



BLAM



GOOD.

WE WERE
HOPING FOR
A CHALLENGE
TONIGHT.

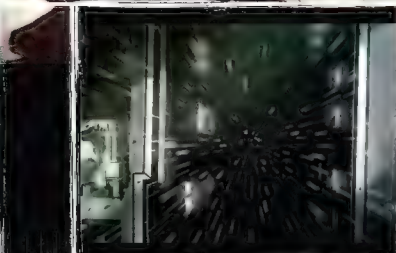
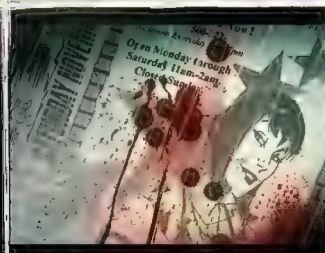


THOUGH I HAVE TO SAY... I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE REGENERATE ITSELF QUITE THAT FAST.

WOULDN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE POWER YOU ABSORBED FROM DECAPITATING ONE OF OUR MEMBERS--WOULD IT?*

*Issue 201--Todd

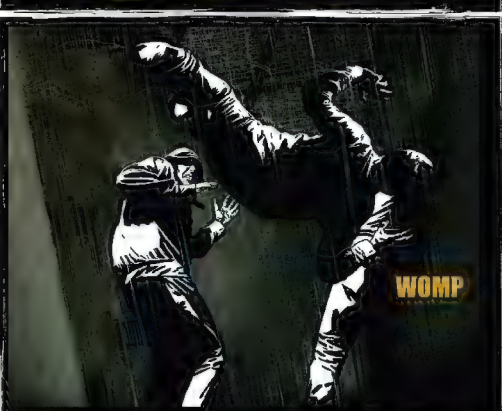


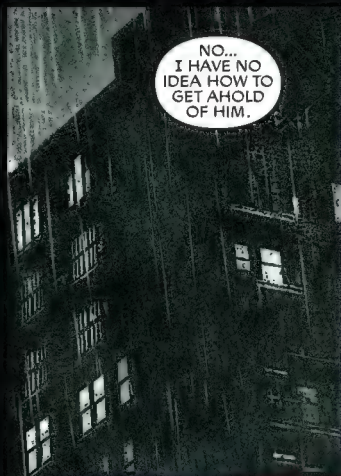


THAT
THE BEST
YOU'VE
GOT?!

FAR
FROM
IT!







NO...
I HAVE NO
IDEA HOW TO
GET AHEAD
OF HIM.



SO, NO,
YOU CAN'T
BOOK HIM
ON YOUR
SHOW.

ME? WHAT
WOULD I TALK
ABOUT?
I'M NOT...

HELLO,
THIS IS MARC
ROSEN.

BREEP

CAN YOU
HOLD A
MOMENT,
PLEASE?

HELLO?

SORRY, HE'S
NOT HERE, AND I
DON'T KNOW WHEN
HE'LL RETURN. SO
TEXT
ME YOUR INFO TO THE
NUMBER YOU JUST
DIALED...

BREEP



YES,
I'M HIS
MANAGER!
BUT I CAN'T
HELP YOU
OUT.

LISTEN,
BUD, I GET YOU
HAVE DEADLINES.
NOT MY PROBLEM!
CALL BACK
LATER!

SO IF HE
DOESN'T GIVE YOU AN
EXCLUSIVE, YOUR OFFER
ISN'T GOOD? SWEETHEART,
I HAVE TO TELL YOU, I'VE
BEEN FIELDING CALLS FOR
TWO HOURS AND I'VE HAD
A DOZEN OFFERS BETTER
THAN YOURS.

SO, WOULD
THAT ARTICLE
INCLUDE THE
COVER OF YOUR
MAGAZINE,
OR NOT?



SUSAN--HEY,
SUSAN! DID YOU
GET IN TOUCH WITH
SARA YET?

EXCUSE
ME, SOME-
ONE'S YELLING AT
ME ACROSS THE
ROOM.



NO...BUT
I'VE LEFT
ABOUT TWENTY
MESSAGES.

I
APOLOGIZE...
WHAT
NETWORK ARE
YOU CALLING
FROM?

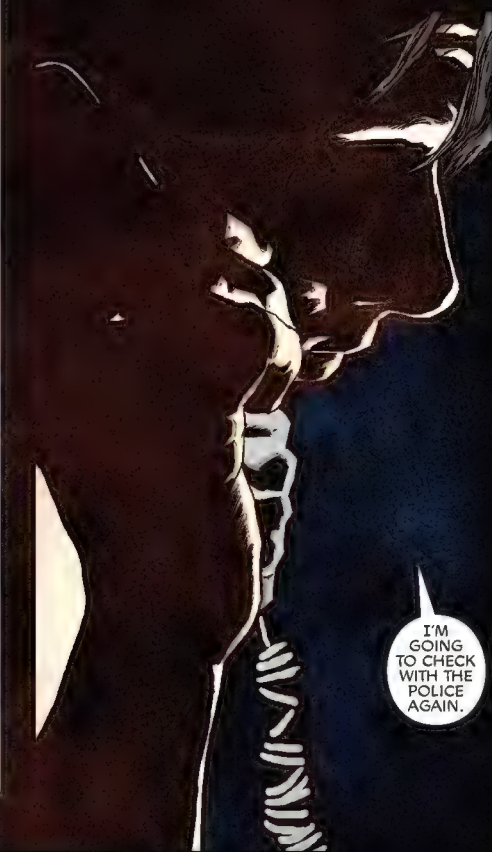


TRY HER
AGAIN!

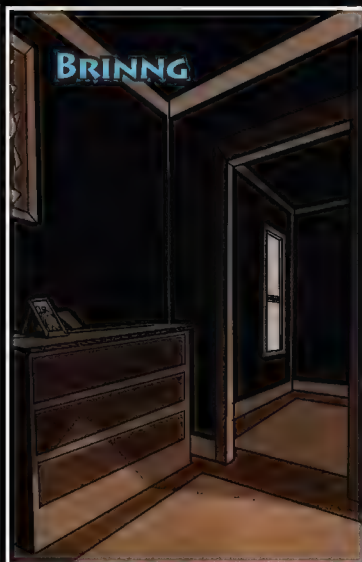


SHE'S THE
ONLY ONE
WHO MIGHT
KNOW WHERE
JIM IS.

FINE.

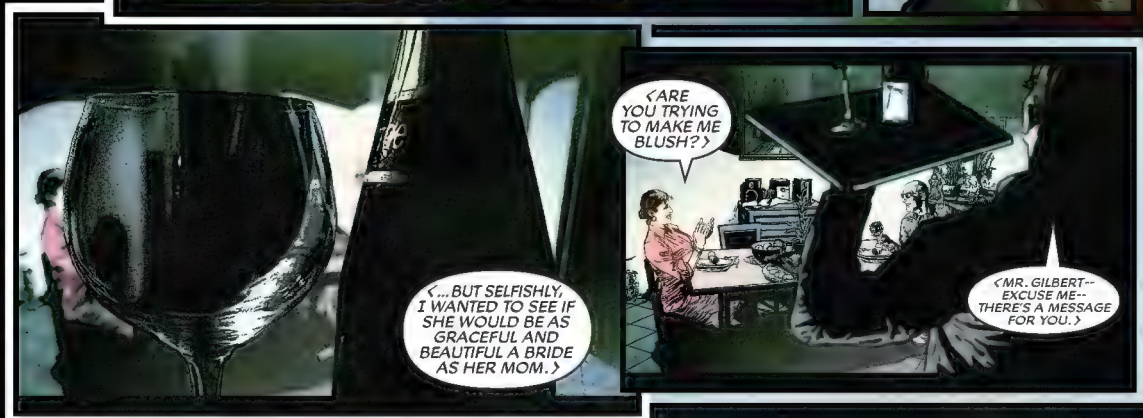


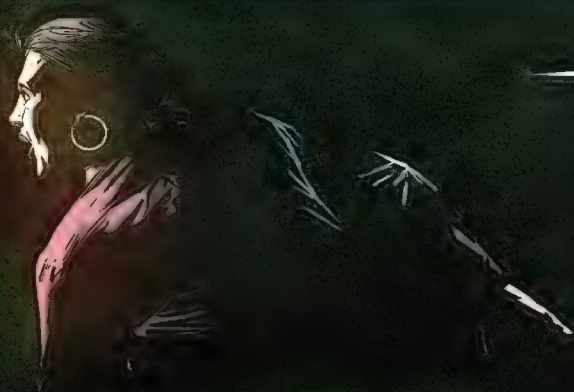
I'M
GOING TO CHECK
WITH THE POLICE
AGAIN.



WE'RE
WORRIED
ABOUT
YOU.









<NO.>

<IT'S NOTHING LIKE THAT.>

<THEN WHAT?>

<IT'S THAT TIME. THE ONE WE'VE TALKED ABOUT BEFORE.>

<HE'S HERE?>

<YES.>



<THEN PLEASE--I BEG YOU--DON'T OPEN THAT DOOR.>

<THINK OF YOUR FAMILY...>

<I HAVE MY DUTY.>

<WHY? WHY CAN'T THEY FORGET ABOUT YOU? HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN...?>

<YOU NEED TO GO.>

<ALEXANDER!... TAKE HER.>



<NO!!>

<LEAVE ME ALONE! I WANT TO STAY!!>

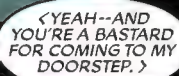
<HE'S MY HUSBAND!!>

<FAREWELL, MY LOVE.>



<DON'T OPEN **THAT DOOR!!**>

<DON'T!... JAVIER--YOU CAN'T!!>







THIS NEW SPAWN--HE'S BEEN DRAWING ATTENTION TO HIMSELF AT A TIME YOU SAID WE NEEDED TO BE MORE DISCREET.

SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?

YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THAT MALEBOLGIA FIGHTS HIS WARS IN THE SHADOWS. HE DOESN'T BELIEVE IN SCARING THE POPULACE TOO MUCH--BECAUSE THEY MIGHT GO RELIGIOUS ON HIM.

INSTEAD HE GETS OTHERS TO DO HIS DIRTY WORK.

BY CONSTANTLY TEMPTING THE HUMANS WITH SIN.



RIGHT! THEN HE RECRUITS THEM AFTER THEY'RE TAINTED.

SO, I FIGURE THE MORE LIGHT SHINING ON SPAWN, THE SAFER HE'LL BE... AT LEAST FOR AWHILE.

WHICH IS WHY YOU AND I NEED TO BE ON THE SAME PAGE--OF EVERY ASPECT AND DETAIL WE'RE GOING TO IMPLEMENT. SO YOU WANT TO BE IN CHARGE-- THEN FINE! DO IT! LEAD US!

BUT STOP YOUR DAMN PUSSY-FOOTING AROUND! WE NEED TO SEIZE CONTROL OF THE SPAWN COSTUME. SHORT OF THAT, WE'LL LOSE.



HOW LONG BEFORE HE'S AT FULL STRENGTH AGAIN?

YOU MEAN, MALEBOLGIA?


HARD TO TELL. I HEARD HE SHOWED UP IN RUSSIA RECENTLY AND VAPORIZED SOME FORMER PROFESSOR WHO'D GONE OFF THE DEEP END A FEW YEARS AGO.

THAT MEANS HE'S COLLECTING AGAIN. AND IF HE SUCCEEDS, HIS POWER WILL BE EVEN GREATER THAN IT WAS BEFORE.


DING! DING! DING!

THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN TRYING TO TELL YOU, NUMB NUTS!

YOU NEED TO LEARN TO CONTROL YOURSELF, CLOWN, AND SPEAKING OF CONTROL...




"...I NEEDED TO SEE HOW MUCH CONTROL YOU'RE EXERTING OVER THIS SPAWN."




"LET ME GUESS...THAT'S WHY YOU BROUGHT IN SOME OF THE OLD GUARD, unh?* THOUGHT THEY COULD HELP SPEED THINGS ALONG, DID YOU? NOT A BAD IDEA."

*See issue 203--Todd



"BUT I HAVE TO TELL YOU, BLUDD--YOU GOING BEHIND MY BACK, THAT'S NOT HOW THINGS ARE GOING TO WORK, GOT IT?--IF WE CAN'T FIND A WAY TO TRUST EACH OTHER, THEN WE'RE BOTH DEAD WHEN FREAK BECOMES MALEBOLGIA."


"YOU'RE RIGHT. NEITHER OF US IS STRONG ENOUGH ON OUR OWN."



HEY, SPAWNIE! WE'RE JUST GETTING WARMED UP.

WATCH THIS CONVERSION!

"SO, WHAT'RE YOUR BOYS DOING NOW?"



"RUNNING AN
ERRAND FOR
ME. ONE WHICH
YOU'LL FIND
QUITE
INTERESTING."

"I TOLD THEM TO PUT
SPAWN THROUGH A
SET OF TESTS, TO GAUGE
WHAT WE'RE ACTUALLY
DEALING WITH. HOPE
YOU DON'T MIND."

"NOT AT ALL. BESIDES, I'VE
ALREADY HAD A PEP TALK
WITH THE THREE OF THEM--
HOPE YOU DON'T MIND
EITHER. 'CAUSE THE LAST
THING WE NEED..."

"...ARE MORE
SURPRISES!"



To be continued





Tyrant
Lizard
King

EMPIRE